Reduction of forests

† 463. SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that forest areas are continuously reducing in the country;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to formulate any plan for the protection of forests;

(c) if so, by when and details thereof; and

(d) if not, reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) No, Sir. The forest areas are not continuously reducing in the country. The Forest Survey of India brings out a report on the status of forest cover biennially in the country. As per the State of Forest Report 2001 and 2003 the forest cover in different States/UTs is as under:

(Area in km^2)

State/UT	2001 Assessment	2003 Assessment	Change
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	44,637	44,419	-218
Arunachal Pradesh	68,045	68,019	-26
Assam	27,714	27,826	112
Bihar	5,720	5,558	-162
Chhattisgarh	56,448	55,998	-450
Delhi	Hi	170	59
Goa	2,095	2,156	61
Gujarat	15,152,	14,946	-206
Haryana	1,754,	1,517	-237
Himachal Pradesh	14,360	14,353	-7
Jammu & Kashmir	21,237	21,267	30
Jharkhand	22,637	22,716	79
Karnataka	36,991	36,449	-542
Kerala	15,560	15,577	17
Madhya Pradesh	77,265	76,429	-836
Maharashtra	47,482	46,865	-617
Manipur	16,926	17,219	293
Meghalaya	15,584	16,839	1,255
Mizoram	17,494	18,430	936
Nagaland	13,345	13,609	264

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

1	2	3	4
Orissa	48,838	48,366	-472
Punjab	2,432	1,580	-852
Rajasthan	16,367	15,826	-541
Sikkim	3,193	3,262	69
Tamil Nadu	21,482	22,643	1,161
Tripura	7,065	8,093	1,028
Uttar Pradesh	13,746	14,118	372
Uttaranchal	23,938	24,465	527
West Bengal	10,693	12,343	1,650
Andaman & Nicobar	6.930	6,964	34
Chandigarh	9	15	6
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	219	225	6
Daman & Diu	6	8	2
Lakshadweep	27	23	-4
Pondicherry	36	40	4
TOTAL	675,538	678,333	2,795

(b) and (c) For protection of existing forests, financial assistance is provided to the States/ UTs under the Integrated Forests Protection Scheme, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on sharing basis. The activities funded under the scheme include forest fire management and control, mobility, communication, arms and ammunition, survey and demarcation.

(d) Does not arise.

Need for protection of forest

† 464. SHRI KESHUBHAI S. PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that desert areas are increasing in the country due to deforestation;

(b) if so, whether Government would consider to formulate any special plan for the protection of forest by cutting a check on it;

(c) if so, by when; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) As per the State of Forest Report 2003, there is an increase of 2795km2 of forest cover over 2001 assessment. Further as per the Wasteland Atlas of India 2005 published by Ministry of Rural Development and National Remote Sensing Agency, the area under the category of sands-inland/costal has shown a decline by 0.51% during the year 2003 over the previous assessment.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.